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This 1995 issue of the "Carolinas Speech Communication Annual" contains the following articles: "Contrast and Complement in Presidential Campaign Communication: Adjusting the Vice Presidential Role in the Clinton-Gore Campaign" (Rob L. Wiley); "Film Critic as Rhetor: Crafting a Fitting Response to Racial Images in 'Places in the Heart'" (Deborah A. Brunson); "Linguistic Intelligence and Academic Success: Language Complexity and Flexibility as Predictors of Academic Achievement in a Speech Communication Theory Course" (Ralph R. Behnke and Chris R. Sawyer); and "Scientism and General Semantics" (Roy Schwartzman). (NKA)

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CONTRAST AND COMPLEMENT IN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION: ADJUSTING THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL ROLE IN THE CLINTON-GORE CAMPAIGN

Rob L. Wiley*

The American Vice Presidency qualifies as one of the most unique political offices in any liberal democracy. Its occupant may have virtually nothing to do and suffer through the office in great frustration, only to ascend to the most powerful office in the world in an instant. Lyndon Johnson's "brooding" years as vice president, followed by his ascent to the pinnacle of power after the events of November 22, 1963 come to mind (Witcover, 1992, pp. 164-81). As an occupant of the office, Hubert Humphrey, once said, being vice president is "potentially everything and yet nothing" (Natoli, 1988b). The constitution gives the office's holder only two specific duties, presiding over the Senate (art. I, § 3, cl. 4) and assuming the office of president upon the removal, death, resignation, or incapacitation of the president (amend. XXV). Though many states organize their executive branches on the federal model by having the lieutenant governor preside over the state senate, in some the lieutenant governor plays a substantially more significant governmental role than the vice president does at the federal level.[1] One vice president, John Nance Garner, thought so much of the job that he once claimed that the vice presidency was not worth "a bucket of warm spit."[2]

Despite the vice presidency's inherent frustrations, its constitutional weakness, and the low regard that many hold for the office and its occupants, it has become "the most common stepping-stone to the Presidency" (Kiser, 1992, p. 500). Though vice presidents have sometimes had trouble being elected president immediately after their vice presidential terms (Natoli, 1988a), five of the ten post-World War II presidents—Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and George

Bush—served as vice president first. Two others—Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale—became presidential nominees though neither reached the White House. In post-World War II America, an excellent way to become president has been to become vice president first.

Despite easing the path to the presidency, the vice presidency has received scant analysis from communication scholars. With the notable exception of Bostdorff (1991) most of the rhetorical studies about vice presidents have examined their speaking as individuals or as part of a broader political communication phenomena (e.g., King and Anderson, 1971), not *as vice presidents*. Nearly all the rhetorical analyses of those vice presidents who later became presidents concerned their presidential campaigns and tenure, not their communication as vice presidential candidates or while they served in that office. The one existing study of a vice presidential debate focused on the gender issues inherent in the 1984 confrontation between George Bush and Geraldine Ferraro, not the institutional aspects of a debate between vice presidential candidates (Sullivan, 1989).

Studying the vice presidential role appears particularly appropriate now because of the office's recent propensity for producing presidents and because the 1992 campaign featured a seemingly changed vice presidential approach on the winning ticket. Heightened importance of the vice presidential candidate appears to have carried over into more significant governmental activity for the vice president.[3] These developments suggest that those interested in political communication should examine the communication practices of vice presidential candidates and vice presidents. Such analysis could suggest theoretical approaches for institutional study of vice presidential communication and insight into national campaigns generally. This essay attempts a beginning of that process.

ROLE AND THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Any rhetorical analyst examining the role of vice presidential nominees in American campaigns must first face the absence of

well-developed models for analyzing vice presidential communication. Rhetorical scholars simply have not been very interested in the vice presidency or the campaigns of those seeking it; they have, as noted, restricted themselves to somewhat limited consideration of the speaking of a few individual vice presidents. The analyst investigating the vice presidential role writes on a sparsely transcribed, if not blank, slate.[4]

It seems plausible that the beginning involves defining role as a concept. Small group and interpersonal communication theory offers fundamental principles on the idea of role that also apply to public communication settings. Beyond that, the task requires finding, describing, and analyzing recent vice presidential campaign communication. Despite the lack of theoretical treatment of vice presidential campaign rhetoric, we do know some things about the way that past vice presidential candidates talked and we can look at what happened in 1992. The analyst armed with such information can apply that history to the available theories about role. That could lead to useful observations about the vice presidential candidate's role. Developing a theory of vice presidential campaign communication seems to require at least these initial steps.

Small group and interpersonal communication theorists focus on the idea of role in evaluating group communication behavior:

> Within the group system, the structural element which connects group norms to the behavior of the individual group member is the social role. *Roles* are sets of expectations which members in groups share concerning the behavior of each individual who occupies a position within the group structure. When individuals interact with each other over significant periods of time within the same group, a pattern of expectations develops and forms the constellation of expectations which we call roles (Palazzolo, 1988, p. 17).

> In effect, people know how to behave and communicate because of roles (Hartley, 1993, p. 119).

Structural role theory "views the world as organized in terms of expectations" from a variety of sources including "scripts" that specify how individuals should behave (Turner, 1991, pp. 412-13).

Those interacting with an individual come to expect that person to occupy a particular role (Mayfield, 1967, p. 18). At an even more basic level, the idea of role recognizes that, in society, roles constitute "the specific position one occupies at a given time and place" (Mayfield, p. 18). Very early in the study of roles in groups, scholars concluded that individuals take on specialized communication roles and that roles function in groups much as they do in society at large (Haiman, 1957, p. 165).

Students of roles and the way that people perform them in various social settings have emphasized how individuals invent roles when confronted with new and unusual situations (Vause and Weimann, 1981). These observers, in looking at communication strategies that people use in unfamiliar situations, determined that inventing a role requires understanding expectations about the demands of that role (Vause and Weimann, p. 242). The process of developing a strategy for enacting a role involves "rhetorical invention," what amounts to developing logical and psychological procedures for selecting and synthesizing materials appropriate to the rhetorical problem at hand (Auer, 1969, p. 222). These ideas reinforce the thought that a role involves particular communication behavior that the expectations of those observing the role affect and limit.

These observations about roles in groups and in society generally offer ideas for analyzing the rhetorical role of vice presidential candidates. Voters and involved political observers develop and retain expectations about how candidates and office holders talk. These expectations concern how one gets a particular political job and what one says (and how) once in it. Voters and the political community hold expectations about vice presidential talk, just as they do about presidential, congressional, or county sheriff talk. Such roles, as Haiman and Mayfield observed, may become quite specialized.

Role expectation—what people expect vice presidential candidates to say and do—may actually come to define the role. Examining the way that vice presidential candidates have talked over time could reveal firm expectations that voters and the political community have about how vice presidential candidates

talk and act, that is, their role. Changing the vice presidential candidate's role almost certainly involves selecting strategies and synthesizing approaches appropriate to the task of adjusting expectations and, therefore, the role (Vause and Weimann, pp. 243-44).

CONTRAST AS THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE'S ROLE

The tone of many recent vice presidential candidate selections and subsequent campaigns suggests several political and rhetorical dimensions that define the major characteristics of the vice presidential role. These dimensions include personal/political factors, rhetorical aggressiveness, and campaign operations. Taken together these dimensions suggest that, in recent times, political and rhetorical contrast with the presidential nominee constitutes the dominant characteristic of the vice presidential role. History demonstrates that many post-war vice presidential campaigns emphasized the differences between the presidential and vice presidential candidates. This contrast element has been present so often in national campaigns that it has become an expectation that has defined the role of vice presidential candidate.

Personal/Political Factors

Geographic and ideological balance have frequently characterized vice presidential selections and campaigns. John Kennedy's choice of Lyndon Johnson had a great deal to do with Kennedy's belief that he needed a southerner on the ticket and that Johnson could help the Democrats carry his critical home state of Texas (Witcover, 1992, pp. 140-63). The 1988 Democratic presidential nominee, Michael Dukakis, sought, unsuccessfully, the same Massachusetts-Texas connection when he selected Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen as his running mate (Witcover, 1992, p. 334). Walter Mondale of Minnesota geographically balanced Jimmy Carter's Georgia roots, as Carter acknowledged in noting that his formula for picking a vice presidential candidate included consideration of "geographical strength" (Carter, 1982, p. 36). One of the reasons that Arizona's Barry Goldwater, the 1964 Republican presidential nominee, selected New York Congressman William

Miller was that Miller, a northeastern Catholic, gave the ticket "proper geographic and ethnic balance" (White, 1965, p. 214). Geographic balance remains a classic consideration in vice presidential selection.[5] Between 1884 and 1984, major parties offered only five tickets that were not regionally balanced, and four of those lost (Dudley and Rapoport, 1989, p. 537). Goodman (1992), in fact, called it an "ironclad rule" that a major party ticket should combine east and west or north and south.

Ideological diversity also contrasts presidential and vice presidential candidates. In 1988 northeastern liberal Dukakis picked Texas tory Bentsen. Jimmy Carter, running in 1976 as a southern moderate, selected Mondale who had a reputation as one of the Senate's most liberal members. Carter supposedly had not expected to hit it off very well with Mondale because he presumed he would find him "too liberal" (Schram, 1977, p. 203). The belief in ideological diversity as a virtue on a national political ticket has also extended to suggestions of "dream tickets" composed of ideological opposites. The most notorious, and perhaps most unrealistic, such suggestion was that liberal New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller head a 1968 Republican ticket with conservative California Governor Ronald Reagan as the vice presidential nominee.[6] In 1976, largely as a ploy that might stop Gerald Ford's presidential nomination, Reagan announced that if he were nominated he would choose liberal Pennsylvania Senator Richard Schweiker as his running mate (Witcover, 1971, pp. 456-71). Reagan proposed a convention rule that would have required that Ford reveal his vice presidential choice in advance of the presidential roll call (Witcover, 1977, pp. 475-503). The ploy failed, though Reagan nearly derailed Ford's seemingly secure nomination.

Rhetorical Aggressiveness

Rhetorical aggressiveness seems the major style-of-communication factor that contrasts presidential and vice presidential nominees. That aggressiveness permits a high road/low road strategy; the presidential nominee seeks the posture of statesman while the vice presidential candidate cuts and slashes on the opposition. Most post-war presidential nominees have

assigned their vice presidential nominees such duty; a few based their vice presidential selection largely on the prospect's perceived ability to carry out the attack-dog job.

Richard Nixon earned his spot on the 1952 Republican ticket partly because of the aggressive, attacking reputation that he earned in his 1946 House race against Jerry Voorhis and while running for the Senate in 1950 against Helen Gahagan Douglas (Wills, 1969, pp. 76-92). While Nixon's 1952 "Checkers" speech made him famous because it helped him survive charges of financial impropriety, knowledgeable rhetorical critics have emphasized that attacks on the Truman administration and the Democratic ticket of Adlai Stevenson and John Sparkman comprised a major part of Nixon's speech strategy (Ryan, 1988).

While Republican Nixon may have perfected the job of vice presidential hatchet man, his successors demonstrated its bipartisan character. Hubert Humphrey, in his 1964 Democratic convention acceptance speech, proved his worth as "a formidable political antagonist" by offering "a scornful litany of indictments against [Barry] Goldwater's voting record" (Eisele, 1972, p. 221). The rhetorical technique that Humphrey employed—following each indictment of Goldwater with the chant "but not Senator Goldwater"—was picked up by Mondale in his 1980 acceptance speech and used against Ronald Reagan (Germond and Witcover, 1981, p. 205). Goldwater selected Miller as his running mate because of geography *and* Miller's "quick and partisan" debating ability that Goldwater hoped would provoke an outburst from Johnson (White, 1965, pp. 214-15). Republican conservatives forced the unelected Gerald Ford to drop the unelected Nelson Rockefeller from the 1976 Republican ticket. Ford, in deference to the supposed virtue of a vice presidential hatchet man, made Kansas Senator Bob Dole his running mate. Ford reportedly thought that Dole could help because "possibly his acid tongue might goad Carter into error" (Witcover, 1977, p. 510).

No presidential-vice presidential tandem better illustrated the high road/low road rhetorical strategy than the Nixon-Agnew team of 1968-74. Spiro Agnew went on the offensive in the 1968 campaign against Vietnam war protesters and Democratic

nominee Hubert Humphrey. He even compared Humphrey to Neville Chamberlain, the British leader who signed the pre-World War II Munich appeasement pact. Once in office, Agnew continued his fierce attacks on Vietnam war dissenters, "in spite of Nixon's inaugural admonition against rhetorical excess" (Witcover, 1992, p. 233). Agnew made his most vicious attacks on political opponents during the 1970 Congressional elections when he served as the administration's point man for trying to elect a Republican Congress (Witcover, 1992, pp. 240-41). Nixon, meanwhile, concerned himself with the Vietnam peace talks and other foreign crises.

Campaign Operations

Physically separating the campaigns of presidential and vice presidential nominees has offered another way of contrasting them. After the national convention, capped by the platform celebration with arms jointly raised in triumph, the public usually has not seen the presidential and vice presidential candidates together again very often (Holmes, 1992). The separate campaigns accentuate the contrast between presidential and vice-presidential candidates. By putting physical distance between the two, national tickets emphasized that the vice presidential role was not an essential one and passed up any opportunity to project a team concept of which the vice presidential candidate was an integral part. This approach confirms and supports Bostdorff's (1991) observations concerning vice presidential subservience. Voters and the political community came to expect separate campaigns and, as with the other contrasting factors, defined the role in terms of its political, personal, and rhetorical separateness and inferiority.

AN ALTERNATIVE ROLE: VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AS COMPLEMENT

If contrast characterized the vice presidential candidate role on most recent national tickets, Bill Clinton seems to have tried something different with Al Gore in 1992. The personal/political dynamics of Gore's selection, Gore's rhetorical emphasis, and the Clinton-Gore campaign operation portrayed Gore as a compliment to Clinton, not

as a contrast. The approach indicated a fundamental change in the political and rhetorical role of the vice presidential candidate.

Gore's selection broke the basic contrast rule on the personal/political factors.[7] Geographically, of course, Gore provided no balance since Clinton hailed from Arkansas and Gore from next-door Tennessee. Many Democratic operatives, in fact, wanted a southerner as the party's 1992 standard bearer because they realized that "[u]ntil the Democrats nominate someone who can carry the South and at least part of the West, they can forget the presidency" (Clift, 1991). Most, however, saw Clinton and Gore as rivals for the top of the ticket, not running mates (Clift).

The decision to forego geographic balance in vice presidential selection indicated, in no uncertain terms, a Democratic attempt at attracting southern electoral votes. Indeed, the choice of Gore immediately made the Democratic team competitive in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and North Carolina as well as Arkansas and Tennessee (Applebaum, 1992). The Clinton-Gore ticket eventually carried Louisiana, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

Gore's presence on the Democratic ticket complimented Clinton in two other significant ways, one ideological, one personal. Ideologically, both Clinton and Gore identified themselves with the moderate wing of the Democratic party galvanized by the Democratic Leadership Council (Suro, 1992, Oct. 31). That group of largely white, southern moderates and conservatives began arguing in the mid-1980s that Democrats could regain the White House only if the party made a philosophical move toward the center (Broder and Balz, 1991). Since Democrats could not project a centrist image with liberal presidential nominees like Mondale and Dukakis, they offered Clinton and Gore as "cautious moderates" who would help the party "carve out a fresh identity as the voice of the solid, respectable center" (Dickinson, 1992). After the election, some thought that their victory, particularly since they ran on a message of racial tolerance, "had erased an old stigma and made geography irrelevant" (Rowan, 1992).

Another personal/political factor was the assistance that Gore could give Clinton in forging a message of generational change. The 46 year-old Clinton and the 44 year-old Gore, at the time of their election, made up the youngest team to win the White House in the country's history (Ifill, 1992, July 10; Suro, 1992, Oct. 30). Gore emphasized the generational point in his remarks on his selection to the ticket:

> The time has come. Throughout American history, each generation has passed on leadership to the next. That time has come again—the time for a new generation of leadership for the United States of America ("Excerpts," 1992).

Though Clinton and Gore had plenty of similarities, they also had some important differences that benefitted Clinton's candidacy considerably. Gore, for example, served in Vietnam despite his disdain for the war and his father's position as a prominent Senate opponent of American involvement there.[8] His war service, perhaps, took some of the sting out of Clinton's lingering draft problem. Clinton's protest of the war and Gore's service in it symbolized the two sides of the generational coin and emphasized that Americans born after World War II and molded by the Vietnam trauma had come of age and were ready to govern, no matter their individual response to the Vietnam dilemma. The Democratic ticket, with Gore on it, therefore, could appeal to all of the baby boom generation (Ivins, 1992).

Little in the available history of Gore's selection as Clinton's vice presidential running mate suggests that Clinton picked him primarily for his ability to perform the hatchet-man job. Certainly during the 1992 campaign Gore attacked George Bush, Dan Quayle, and twelve years of Republican rule (e.g., Jenkins, 1992; Wilkerson, 1992). Any candidate on a national political ticket spends some time attacking the opposition. Gore, however, seems not to have made attacking the Republicans the staple of his campaign; he instead pressed Clinton's basic economic arguments and the contention that this Democratic ticket offered more moderate views than its predecessors on issues like welfare, crime control, and personal responsibility (Kelly, 1992). Gore, in fact,

claimed that he had not done what attacking he did "in the traditional way" (Suro, 1992, Oct. 31).

The Democrats probably used no more significant communication device for assigning Gore a complimentary role than the frequent bus trips that Clinton and Gore took together. Instead of separating the presidential and vice presidential candidates as most recent tickets did, the 1992 Democratic campaign kept the two together much of the time. The initial bus trip, referred to by the media as "Bill and Al's Excellent Adventure" (Mathis, 1992) began in New York immediately after the Democratic National Convention and, for five days, wound through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois toward a massive finishing rally in St. Louis (Ifill, 1992, July 23). The tours became so popular that the Clinton-Gore campaign eventually put on eight bus trips that included Clinton, Gore, and their wives on "smiling double-dates that projected the ticket's defining image" (Suro, 1992, Oct. 31). Clinton quickly realized the appeal that the Gore family, in combination with his own, could have:

I think in a funny way it was one of those decisions that was bigger than you might have thought. . . . I didn't sense it was going to be as electric as it was until we walked out the back of the Governor's mansion at the announcement, and I looked at him and Tipper and their kids, and Hillary and Chelsea, and for the first time it just hit me like a bolt; this was going to be an awesomely popular thing (Germond and Witcover, 1993, p. 333).

The bus trips were but one indication of the complimentary Clinton-Gore approach. By early September they had campaigned together on twenty of the fifty-two days since the end of the July National Democratic Convention; Dukakis and Bentsen, by comparison, appeared together less than a half dozen times during the entire 1988 campaign (Holmes 1992). The Clinton-Gore togetherness appears to have continued since the election. When Clinton went on vacation in August 1993, Gore gave Clinton a cardboard cut-out of himself to carry with him so that the President would not feel alone (Carlson, 1993).

THE MEANING OF VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE COMMUNICATION

The role theory principles identified earlier, considered in light of the history of vice presidential campaign communication, reveal that specialization typifies the vice presidential role and that expectations of the voting public and the informed political community influence and define the role. Presidential nominees selected vice presidential candidates for how different they were from themselves. Vice Presidential candidates knew that and acted and spoke accordingly. Changing the vice presidential role in 1992 required selecting strategies and approaches that would adjust expectations about where vice presidential candidates come from, what they believe, and how they talk and campaign. This "rhetorical invention" (Auer 1969) represented a new approach to the question of what a vice presidential candidate should do in a national campaign.

The contrast approach to vice presidential campaigns underlined specialization in the recent vice presidential role. Vice presidential candidates, by and large, have been selected for their supposed appeal in specific geographic regions and to particular ideological constituencies. Lyndon Johnson, Walter Mondale, and William Miller became vice presidential nominees for such reasons. Vice presidential nominees like Richard Nixon and Robert Dole got the assignment, in part, because of demonstrated ability to cut and slash on the opposition; others, like Hubert Humphrey and Mondale, quickly learned that part of the job. The usual habit of separate campaigns only emphasized that vice presidential candidates had specialized tasks apart from those of the presidential nominee.

Expectations about communication and other behavior in a given situation define a role. In most of the post-World War II era, voters and the informed political community expected that vice presidential candidates would come from different parts of the country, perhaps different ideological wings of their parties, that they would perform a more verbally aggressive role than their

presidential running mates, and generally campaign independently. One reason the 1992 Democratic campaign may have begun the process of redefining the vice presidential candidate's role is that it varied so greatly from these expectations.

Immediately after the 1992 election, analysts began to realize that the Democratic strategy had "proved so successful that it could change the criteria by which future presidential aspirants select their running mates" (Pertman, 1992). By selecting someone who was "in many ways so similar, so driven, so high-test-scores smart, so blue-suit sincere that it once seemed inevitable that their ambitions for the White House would collide" (Shapiro, 1992, p. 28), Clinton showed that he based his decision "on where he wanted people to focus" (Pertman, 1992). Clinton and Gore came from adjacent states, represented much the same political orientation, and possessed similar, though not identical, personal characteristics. Clinton apparently saw a virtue in a running mate who augmented his own qualities as opposed to one who contrasted them. Clinton used the vice presidential selection and operated the campaign rhetorically to achieve specific political objectives.

By selecting a running mate perceived as a centrist, Clinton buttressed the case he wanted to make for himself—that he offered the opportunity to re-establish what one political observer has called the "vital liberal center" (Dionne, 1991, pp. 116-18). That vital center was certainly liberal, but in it, liberals could work with moderates and conservatives. Its demise as the dominant force in American politics, largely because of Vietnam and race, left a nation that has "not been the same since" (Dionne, p. 118). By selecting Gore, who mirrored Clinton's interest in complex policy issues and became his "intellectual sidekick" (Suro, 1992, Oct. 31), Clinton also suggested his approach to governing. In the process, Clinton and Gore may have helped change the expectations about the actual governing role that a vice president should play. Selecting strategies appropriate to a changed vice presidential candidate's role, in the Clinton-Gore campaign, became an integral part of an overall campaign approach that foreshadowed the administration's operational mode. If presidential nominees

continue adjustments in the vice presidential campaign role with an eye toward a changed governmental role for the vice president, certainly the electorate should adjust its view of the importance of the vice presidency.

In one sense, of course, the nature of the American system for selecting vice presidential candidates defines the role. Because the presidential nominee decides what he (perhaps someday, she) wants in a vice presidential candidate,[9] the vice presidential candidate's role depends on the presidential candidate's conception of that role. The vice presidential candidates who emphasized contrast did so because the presidential candidate wanted that. In some ways, the selection method itself defines the vice presidential role; as long as presidential nominees pick their running mates they will select a political and rhetorical role based on strategic and personal factors that lead to the contrast or compliment approach.

Even though presidential candidates determine the vice presidential role, studying that role yields rich dividends in terms of understanding national campaigns and national governance. Some of the frustrations that vice presidents have experienced probably have their roots in the contrast approach to vice presidential campaigns. A vice president picked because of differences with the president probably has a good chance of seeing those differences exacerbated during their time in office. In an environment characterized by presidential domination, the vice president whose ultimate identity rests in differences with the president will almost certainly find discomfort. Analysts of the way that vice presidential candidates interacted with their presidential teammates during the campaign could certainly predict such a circumstance. Clinton and Gore's complimentary campaign approach seems to have resulted in a complimentary vice presidency. Analysts now describe Gore as "the strongest No. 2 ever" (Berke, 1994, p. 29). The Clinton-Gore tenure, however long it lasts, should provide some indication of whether the compliment approach that they took in their campaign leads to a long-term adjustment in the vice president's governing role and,

therefore, affects the fundamental character of the American government.

The author presented an earlier version of this paper at the 1994 Eastern Communication Association convention in Washington, D.C. He expresses his appreciation to Professor Anne Matina for her helpful comments.

1. The Texas Lieutenant Governor, for example, can wield so much power that one recent occupant, Bill Hobby, allegedly "had more effect on Texas government for a longer time with a better end result than anyone since Sam Houston" (Berka, et al., 1989, p. 89).

2. This account of Garner's remark sanitized it. Garner actually compared the vice presidency to another bodily fluid (Whitcover, 1977, pp. 8-9).

3. In the Clinton administration, Vice President Al Gore reportedly operates "pretty much in the middle of things, forging a role as reformer, legislative arm twister, and advisor-in-chief" (Carlson, 1993). Secretary of State Warren Christopher described Gore as more heavily relied on than any vice president ever (Breslaw and Cohn, 1994).

4. Bostdorff (1991, p. 2) makes a useful contribution to understanding the vice presidential role by suggesting that "the contemporary vice presidency is, in effect, a traditional female role." Her analysis emphasized the subservient role that vice presidents frequently play in campaigns and administrations.

5. In theory, the presidential candidate who already enjoys a national political reputation, i.e., Eisenhower (1952), Johnson (1964), Bush (1988), may need geographic balance less than a newcomer like Kennedy or Carter.

6. *Time* magazine hyped the possibility of a Rocky-Ronnie ticket with a 1967 cover story ("Republicans: Anchors Aweigh," 1967, pp. 17-21). Then little-known Maryland Governor Spiro Agnew professed support for such an idea (Republicans: The Non-Candidates, 1967, pp. 22-23). Rockefeller, of course, became Gerald

Ford's vice president (1974-77) and Reagan served eight years as president (1981-89).

7. Gore's selection certainly gave Clinton's campaign an immediate boost. As the Democratic Convention began, Clinton moved ahead in the polls (Germond and Whitcover, 1993, pp. 343-44). Clinton later said he believed that Gore's selection "had a lot to do" with his election (Germond and Whitcover, 1993, p. 333).

8. Albert Gore, Sr., lost his 1970 Tennessee re-election bid largely because of his opposition to the war (Shapiro, 1992).

9. America once selected vice presidents by giving the office to the person finishing second in the race for president. That changed in 1804 with passage and ratification of the Twelfth Amendment, which mandated separate electoral college balloting for president and vice president (Whitcover, 1992, pp. 12-26).

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FILM CRITIC AS RHETOR: CRAFTING A FITTING RESPONSE TO RACIAL IMAGES IN PLACES IN THE HEART

Deborah A. Brunson

Places in The Heart, a 1984 Academy Award-winning film, tells the Depression-era story of a recently widowed Texas housewife who raises enough money to save her farm by harvesting a cotton crop with the aid of her two young children, a Black farmer who has fallen on hard times, and a blinded war veteran. Robert Benton, who wrote and directed the film, received the Academy Award for Best Screenplay, and Sally Field collected Best Actress award for her portrayal of the young widow, Edna Spalding. Also receiving critical acclaim were Danny Glover for his portrayal of the Black itinerant farmer Moses (Moze), John Malkovich as the White blind boarder, Mr. Will, and Nestor Almendros for cinematography.

Although Places in the Heart was favorably received by some cinema reviewers as a sensitive, perceptive story of human relationships (Billingsly, 1984; Harmetz, 1984; Schickel, 1984), the film also garnered sharp criticism from other quarters. A chief criticism leveled at the film was that Benton's attempt to craft a thoughtful, insightful commentary about human relationships was actually "...just another calculated tug at the heartstrings..." (Milne, 1985, p. 1068), and a period piece that "...fails signally to move the nodding spectator" (Coleman, 1985, p. 1069). Solomon and McMullen (1991) approach Places in the Heart as an "open" text that lends itself to divergent ideological interpretations, and focus their analysis upon the film's conflicting messages concerning the role of women and the plight of Depression-era farmers. Ruppersburg (1986), also focused upon the film's interpretations of economics and gender. He explored the ideological paradox between America's cherished view of its agrarian tradition and society's support of powerful institutions which often constrain the independent farmer and subvert the traditional family structure.

Although most of the reviews and critical analyses of this film have explored the text from a feminist or Marxist perspective, an essay written by Caputi and Vann (1987) chose to examine the racial component of the text. Their interpretation refutes the implied love/community/family theme and claims that Places in the Heart conveys an implicit message which perpetuates racial stereotypes reminiscent of portrayals in the 1934 film Imitation of Life. The purpose of this essay is to examine the rhetorical strategies employed by Caputi and Vann (1987) to support their claim by applying elements of the rhetorical situation (Bitzer, 1974) to critically analyze their discourse.

Section I examines the critic as rhetor within the perspective of the rhetorical situation, and provides a brief discussion of film criticism as an interpretive process. Section II analyzes the essay by Caputi and Vann (1987) within the framework of Bitzer's (1974) rhetorical situation.

I. Film Critic as Rhetor

Bordwell (1989) noted that the critic's task is to eloquently and convincingly argue for the spectators' acceptance of his or her interpretation. He therefore suggested that the film critic apply the Aristotelian canons of inventio (argument), dispositio (organization of argument) and elocutio (stylistic choices to express argument) to organize his or her interpretation in the most convincing presentation. When expressed as an enthymeme, the critic is asserting the following: "I am a knowledgeable observer and interpreter; this film has much value/little value/no value."

When the critic asserts, "I am a knowledgeable observer and interpreter" such a statement should optimally mean that she or he has a comprehensive world view of cinema, its history, and the cultural context within which the film to be reviewed is to be placed. If we transplant the critic's enthymeme into the theoretical domain of rhetorical situation, (Bitzer, 1974) the propositions would be altered from "I am a knowledgeable observer and interpreter; this film has much value/little value/no value" into "I am sensitive to and cognizant of the rhetorical situation; my

criticism is a fitting response to the exigencies created by this film or by the exigencies in the social order that speak through it."

Bitzer (1974) expressed the nature of the rhetorical situation as a necessary antecedent to the fitting response: "We need to understand that a particular discourse comes into existence because of some specific condition or situation which invites utterance" (p. 250); and

So controlling is situation that we should consider it the very ground of rhetorical activity, whether that activity is primitive and productive of a simple utterance or artistic and productive of the Gettysburg Address. (p. 251)

Bitzer (1974) noted that a rhetorical situation includes three elements: a) the exigency, which is some "...imperfection marked by urgency..." (p. 252). It is some imbalance that, if not acknowledged and addressed appropriately, could adversely affect those touched by it; b) the audience, which is able to mediate the change advocated by the discourse; and c) the constraints, which are elements in the situation that may block or impede the change required to alter or modify the exigency. Constraints may include facts, images, beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and so on.

Clearly, not all films fall into the realm of the rhetorical situation because their text is created from a fictive rhetorical source. However, Bitzer (1974) recognizes that some fictional works are truly rhetorical, noting that "...the fictive rhetorical discourse within a play or novel may become genuinely rhetorical outside fictive context—if there is a real situation for which the discourse is a rhetorical response" (p. 257).

To extend Bitzer's ideas to film, I am suggesting that the film critic often finds himself or herself immersed in a rhetorical situation created by one or more exigencies, either within the film itself and/or within the social order. These exigencies compel the critic to uncover and effectively communicate the "fitting response" to the rhetorical situation within which film speaks to spectator, or audience.

The critic therefore needs to approach the film armed with the following questions: In what historical/social context is this film

being released (i.e. what is happening now in society)? What are the levels of meaning in this film? How does the film's meaning reflect society's historical/social context? It is important that the critic understand the assumptions of film interpretation and apply them appropriately as he or she approaches their task.

Film Interpretation. Bordwell (1989) noted that the distinction between comprehending versus interpreting a film "...follows the classic hermeneutic division between ars intelligendi, the art of understanding, and ars explicandi, the art of explaining" (p. 2). He suggested that critics "do interpretation" of film by searching for meanings that are hidden within the work on four distinct levels.

A. Referential, or the relation between object/story-line and spectator's experiences/knowledge as points of reference. These points of reference may be either imaginary or real. For example, the spatio-temporal world of Places in the Heart is Waxahachie, Texas, 1935, during the Great Depression.

B. Explicit, in which the film speaks literally to the spectator and the meaning is to be taken at face value. Explicit meaning may be verbal or visual.

C. Implicit meanings are covert and symbolic. The spectator is interpreting what the film is indirectly saying to her/him. Implicit meaning is also known as "themes", "problems", "issues", or "questions." For instance, reconciliation is an implicit theme of this film. In other words, "good" people place maintaining community and interpersonal stability above personal disappointments. The text of Places in the Heart converges upon the reconciliation theme in the film's final "church" scene where Margaret, Edna's sister, signals the spectator that she forgives her unfaithful husband, simply by placing her hand over his. Reconciliation is also represented in this scene through the minister's scriptural reading of I Corinthians:13, also known as the "love chapter", as Margaret offers forgiveness.

D. Symptomatic or repressed meanings are those which arise involuntarily or unintentionally from the film and are usually perceived as being contrary to the work's referential, explicit, or

implicit meanings. Symptomatic meanings are analogous to what nonverbal communication scholars call "leakage" (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Bordwell (1989) explained:

> But, one might ask, why does a text not say what it means? The Symptomatic approach has a straightforward answer: the text cannot say what it means; it tries to disguise its actual meaning. The principal analogy here...is to the discourse of the psychoanalytic patient. (pp. 64-65)

This interpretive process identifies "contradictions" or "ambiguities" between the text's implied reality and that which it communicates to the critic/spectator on its hidden, unconscious level. An example of the symptomatic approach is apparent in the following quote and the critics' response. As the director, Benton clearly visualizes the community theme:

> I don't think of the movie as being about her [Edna]...I think it's about all of them. I think what interested me was that her husband was taken away from her, one family unit was destroyed—and it was replaced by three people trying to survive. They were the least likely people, in that time and place to make it—a woman, a blind man, a black man. But they were a family (Bennets, 1984, p. H17).

However, Caputi and Vann (1987) proposed that the thematic treatment of race in Places in the Heart has a deeper meaning that the director clearly did not wish to convey. They maintain that the film relegates blacks to a subservient "place" in American society which they should gratefully accept and warmly embrace. Solomon and McMullen (1991) also recognize this inconsistency in the film's overt meaning concerning community and the contradictory meanings embedded in the text.

The above example illustrates the utility of a symptomatic interpretation, particularly when the task involves uncovering meaning in film that examines the societal roles of ethnic minorities and women. Mulvey (1975) suggested that in film, the female is

traditionally perceived as a passive object whose chief function is ornamental, while the male is cast as the active image, through whose eyes the spectator sees and fantasizes about the female.

The issue of race is likewise troubling for mainstream filmmakers, who are predominently White males that work in a production and distribution industry which is also primarily controlled by White males. The industry has only recently begun to increase access to non-White writers, directors, and producers. However, the representation of Blacks in film, which has historically been mediated by others, have predictably fallen into the categories which Bogle (1990) incorporated in the title of his book: "toms, coons, mulattoes, mammies and bucks."

These conditions suggest that a symptomatic interpretive approach could be a useful analytical framework to apply to any film which includes Black characters, simply because the issue of race has left an indelible mark upon the nation's culture, its social structure, and its institutions (Cripps, 1977; Parenti, 1992; Reid, 1993). White (1984) argued that "as movies represent a conceptualized, ordered reality it becomes apparent that there are world concepts (belonging to those media-employed many) that do not include minorities" (p. 9).

Race and gender figure prominently within the narrative of Places in the Heart, a film made in 1984 about an America 50 years in the past which centers around unresolved social issues that plague contemporary society. With that assumption in mind, the next section will examine the rhetorical approaches and devices used by Caupti and Vann (1987) to critically interpret the meaning and messages of Places in the Heart.

II. Jane Caputi and Helene Vann: Questions of Race and Place: Comparative Racism in 'Imitation of Life' and 'Places in the Heart' -- 1987

Caputi's and Vann's thesis is clearly stated in the essay's opening paragraph: despite the gains Blacks have made within social and political realms, Hollywood is still unwavering in its stereotypical and racist treatment of them on film. This deductive

approach to their persuasive appeal is supported through the writers' claim that Places in the Heart is no more than an updated racist manifesto. Caupti and Vann therefore proposed that the seemingly conciliatory and loving message which most spectators and critics have interpreted from Benton's film is a false message, and suggested that comparing the texts of Places in the Heart and John Stahl's 1934 film Imitation of Life will sufficiently support their claim.

It is clear that Caputi and Vann (1987) perceive Hollywood's treatment of Black images as a serious exigency. They draw numerous parallels between the two films to support their contention that this exigency contributes to a social reality that the spectator holds concerning race and race relations. The critics say that Hollywood's images provide a harbor for and support to images of Blacks which endorse the spectator's rejection of this group as first class citizens. They become the undesired and unwanted "Other" and Caputi and Vann argue that the spectator is programmed to reject the "Other" by each of these stories.

Places in the Heart and Imitation of Life center around two White women without a White man to serve as protector and provider. Each of them accepts the help of a Black person--Delilah in Imitation and Moses in Places--as a servant, whose only desire is to have a place to stay and food to eat. Both women are dramatically saved from economic ruin by their Black compatriots. Moreover, Delilah and Moze ask for nothing in return except to be allowed to stay with and close to their White employers.

The critics provide strong support for this last contention by relating a scene from each film in which Delilah and Moze, clearly in their rights to demand and accept payment for the contribution of their creativity and skills, are uncomfortable with assuming that right.

In Imitation of Life the spectator sees Miss Bea, who has acquired a successful business from selling Delilah's pancake recipe, offering her maid 20 percent of the profits. Caputi and Vann (1987) describe the scene:

'I ain't gonna do it, Miss Bea. I ain't gonna do it.' Miss Bea is perplexed: she explains that now Delilah will be able to have her

own car and home, but Delilah, unbelievably, is interpreting this to mean that Miss Bea is conspiring to send her away. 'Oh honey chile, please don't send me away. Don't do that to me. Let me and Peola [Delilah's daughter] stay the same as we been doing. I's your cook and I wants to stay your cook' (p. 18).

Caputi and Vann (1987) identify a similar subservient theme in Places in the Heart, noting that Moze is willing to work for only room and board. He becomes visibly agitated when Edna pays him $25 for his work in the cotton farming -- a job which has essentially rescued her from economic ruin.

She [Edna] subsequently offers Moses twenty-five dollars which he reluctantly accepts: 'She oughtn't had to have done that' (p. 18)....He [Moses] too does not work for wages, he too at first demurs when offered a cash return from the White widow...(p. 19)

The critics provide other examples to support their claim that Places in the Heart perpetuates racist stereotypes. Two such examples are the lynching of Wiley and Edna's treatment of Moze after his beating by the Ku Klux Klan.

Wiley's lynching, they maintain, is softened for the spectator by distancing its brutality and lawlessness. Two scenes show the young Black man's body: a medium shot as he lay in front of the Spalding home, and a long shot of his body hanging from a tree. This treatment of the lynching conducted by White men who are never arrested for their crime, serve to minimize audience identification with Wiley's fate and the grief of his family and friends.

The critics describe Edna's relationship to Moze as yet another example of the implicit racism in Places. Most telling is the fact that we know next to nothing about Moze: where did he come from? Where is his family? Equally significant is the imbalanced relationship between Moze and Edna. Caputi and Vann (1987) point to the fact that Moze continually endangers himself by advising Edna against the unscrupulous dealings of Simmons, the cotton mill owner. Edna does prevent Moze from being arrested for the theft of her silver. The critics note, however, that the narrative clearly shows this to be a

self-serving act: she needs him to teach her how to farm cotton. However, after Moze has saved Edna from financial ruin by showing her how to successfully farm and sell her cotton, she does not help him against the Klan's assault.

When she first sees Moses, beaten and getting ready to leave, her immediate response is: 'But what will I do without you?' Most importantly, she does not fight for Moses, but passively accepts the will of the Klan. (p. 20)

To the very end Moze is still giving of himself, leaving small gifts for Edna and her two children. What also underscores Edna's inconsistent, ambiguous response is that blind Mr. Will repelled the band's attack, but she appears powerless and mute in the face of this challenge.[1] The critics acknowledge that a plausible rebuttal to their argument is that Edna's response is her only choice within this historical context. They respond to this argument by noting that anti-lynching societies were operating in the south, and that both blacks and whites were speaking out against these illegal acts.

Caputi's and Vann's response holds merit, but again, within the context of this story, and based upon their own evidence, would we really expect Edna to exhibit that kind of supportive behavior? The anti-lynching societies were not that well-organized in 1935. Moreover, White women who organized and supported these societies were from the more affluent upper-class, while Edna is clearly a member of the working class.

Finally, the on-screen relationship between these two characters speaks to the core of interracial experience as it exists in the United States. In this respect, the film could best be understood by an interpretation that includes a symptomatic analysis. In fact, using this approach can offer the spectator alternative perspectives that can be applied to the present state of interracial relationships.

Caputi and Vann (1987) do an exemplary job explicating or interpreting the film; however, the symptomatic analysis is not uniformly applied throughout their essay. More focus on Benton as writer and director, as well as the text, would have yielded opportunities to find unintentional inconsistencies within the

narrative. The ultimate goal of such criticism is to reach the rhetorical audience who "...must be capable of serving as mediator of the change which the discourse functions to produce" (Bitzer, 1974, p. 254). Clearly, issues of race, interracial relationships, and Hollywood's treatment of these issues demand a thorough approach.

For example, the film's ending, a surrealistic "church scene" can be effectively understood from a semiotic perspective, and articulated through a symptomatic technique. The White congregation is passing around communion wine while exchanging the phrase "Peace of God" with each other. Toward the end of the scene we see Moze, run off by the Klan, Sheriff Spalding, and Wiley—both dead and buried—also take communion. The message is that love and the "Peace of God" transcends all social/racial/economic boundaries: forgiveness is reciprocal and eternal.

A symptomatic interpretation might ask the following questions about the setting: If the message is transcending traditional barriers, how does the scene genuinely convey this? Why should the scene be set in any clearly established White or Black church? Why is there not more clearly identified differences between those taking communion?

If a critic probes into these and other questions using a symptomatic interpretive approach, the unintended meanings of this film will most certainly emerge. Caputi and Vann have circuitously tapped into at least one of these meanings: that interracial relationships was an unresolved issue in 1935 and it is still unresolved, both on the Hollywood screen and in American society.

OBSERVATIONS

This essay has examined the rhetorical strategies employed by two critics who refuted the generally favorable response of the American film community to Places in the Heart. Caputi and Vann (1987) claim that the film is inherently racist, and that it perpetuates stereotypical images of Blacks. They also argued that the traditional treatment of Black characters is to distance them from

the central plot -- to make them expendable. Benton's use of this distancing device in an Academy Award film some 50 years after the explicitly racist Imitation of Life lends credence to the critics' unfavorable response to the industry's generally favorable reviews.

Is the Caputi and Vann (1987) criticism a fitting response? If the spectator can identify with and accept the critics' perception of the rhetorical situation--an exigency that involves a film industry that has been traditionally uneven, ambivalent, and stereotypical in its depiction of Blacks--then the arguments presented in their essay appear reasonable, acceptable, and fitting.

Finally, we can see evidence of history repeating itself in the guise of Driving Miss Daisy, the much acclaimed, Academy Award winning film of 1990 (Denby, 1990; Milne, 1990; Sterritt, 1990). Once again, the scenario is repeated: a White woman is left helpless (Miss Daisy can no longer drive her car). She eventually accepts and comes to depend upon Hoke Colburn her Black driver until she becomes ill and is placed in a nursing home. In the final scene of this film, Colburn goes to visit his old employer and friend. The last takes consist of him, the long-time employee, feeding pie to Miss Daisy.

This is a poignant and stirring scene, but it belies some major issues about race, power, and friendship. Because of the longstanding plotline of Blacks stereotypically serving Whites, this final scene in Driving Miss Daisy would have been far more powerful had the roles been reversed. If Hoke had been the one ill and needing help, Miss Daisy lovingly taking on that task would have implicitly spoken to the spectator. Is it too far-fetched to believe that such scenes have occurred within interracial relationships? Such an act, placed in the text, would have underscored the intimacy and symmetrical nature of Hoke's and Daisy's relationship.

The paradox between implicit and symptomatic meaning is an inherent quantity in any American film that addresses interracial relationships, irrespective of the filmmaker's race. Caputi and Vann (1987) were cognizant of the need to craft a strong and elegant fitting response which fully encompassed Aristotle's

canons. However, the starkness and clarity of their argument may make it difficult for many members of the rhetorical audience to accept their appeal as an exigency in need of change.

Elevating the quality of films which feature racial issues will require making and screening more works which examine interracial relationships from the Black, Latino, and Asian perspectives. When such perspectives enter into the cinematic environment, this offers to both critic and spectator a more truthful and thought-provoking product.

One notable example of this alternative perspective is the work of Black writer and director Spike Lee, creator of the critically acclaimed films Do the Right Thing and Jungle Fever. The discussion generated among critics and spectators about each of these films, their meaning, and how they connect with reality causes everyone to ask some difficult questions about interracial relationships (Bogle, 1990; Fenner, 1990; Johnson, 1989; Lubiano, 1991; Saltman, 1992). The dilemma, therefore, that filmmakers confront about race and interracial relationships cannot be recognized for what it is until the film industry provides more opportunities for the spectator to see this complex issue through multiple, diverse interpretations.

ENDNOTE

[1] Solomon and McMullen (1991) also question the purpose and direction of the text in its depiction of the relationship between Moze and Edna. They, too, suggest that Edna's economic need is her primary reason for taking up with Moze (p. 343), and they question why she is apparently mute when the Klan strikes out at her friend: "...Edna accepts his [Moze's] departure almost fatalistically, and the film does not encourage the viewer to question it (though the viewer is certainly enabled to feel outrage at the injustice and loss)" (p. 350).

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LINGUISTIC INTELLIGENCE AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS: LANGUAGE COMPLEXITY AND FLEXIBILITY AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN A SPEECH COMMUNICATION THEORY COURSE

Ralph R. Behnke and Chris R. Sawyer

Abstract: In this report, neurologist and educator Howard Gardner's conceptualization of multiple intelligences working independently of one another, in specific applications, is reviewed. Utilizing one of his seven listed forms, that of linguistic intelligence, its ability to predict students' test scores in an academic setting was examined. The findings indicate that linguistic complexity and flexibility serve as significant and independent predictors of academic success in an advanced level undergraduate speech communication theory course.

In his new book on multiple intelligences Howard Gardner (1993), a neurologist at the Boston University School of Medicine and Harvard University professor, expresses concern over the popular two-faceted view of general intelligence focusing simply on logical-mathematical intelligence and linguistic intelligence. Based upon clearly specified criteria of inclusion and exclusion, he theorizes that there are actually seven independent, multiple intelligences. This conceptualization contrasts markedly with conventional views of intelligence suggesting that one or more of these intelligences may be related to performance of selected tasks while others are not.

Recent research bolsters Gardner's position. For example, Veenman and Elshout (1991, p. 44) observed that while problem-solving analysis operates independently of intelligence, taken together, these measures of mental ability constitute a strong predictor of learning. The existence of multiple facets of

intelligence working independently on some problems and in tandem on others portends an improvement in explanatory power over the traditional two-factor view of intelligence.

Gardner's (1983; 1993) notion, that the mind is a network of largely independent realms of functioning, has elicited considerable support. Johnson-Laird (1983, pp. 117-121) suggests that individual differences in reasoning require component skills that tap diverse mental abilities. Similarly, Boden (1988, p. 167) argues that multiple mental activities operating parallel to one another increase the speed and accuracy with which individuals answer questions. Answering a multiple-choice question, for example, requires a multi-level network linking acquired knowledge with several mental processing capabilities (Goldman-Rakic, 1988). These encapsulated subsystems for thought processing give rise to the key assumption of multiple intelligences, modularity (Fodor, 1983; 1985). Although modularity proponents presume individuals will develop elaborate arrays of mental abilities, they deny the supposition that these arrays will be equally impressive (Shallice, 1988; 1991). Students will succeed to the extent that they adapt questions to the processing capabilities in which they are most skilled (Rumelhart, Smolensky, McClelland, & Hinton, 1986, p. 44).

Critically important to this adaptive communication strategy is students' language sophistication (Chomsky, 1980; MacPhail,1987, p. 655) especially the aspects of flexibility and complexity. For the purposes of this research, Gardner's fourth form "linguistic intelligence" is investigated in an effort to establish its contribution to students' test-taking abilities in a communication theory course. Calling linguistic skill an "intelligence" related to the ability to construct sentences and to put words together in complex ways, neurologist Gardner (1993, p. 21) attributes such linguistic functions to a specific part of the brain, "Broca's Area." Various estimates of students' linguistic capabilities appear to be useful in determining the learning potential and linguistic sophistication needed to succeed in traditional academic programs.

Academic achievements such as reading ability, while making significant contributions to the development of independent learners, have been shown to have a low, positive relationship to

what is generally known as global integration or general intelligence (Behnke, Fowler, & Krayer, 1990). This relationship is a modest one indeed, accounting for only about twenty-two percent of the variance in performance scores leaving seventy-eight percent attributable to factors other than global integration (Jastak & Jastak, 1978, p. 78). Based upon the preceding conceptualizations, it is hypothesized that:

Linguistic complexity and flexibility will be significant, independent predictors of academic success as represented by achievement test scores over information taken from textbook readings in a speech communication theory course.

METHOD

Subjects, Procedures and Instruments

Participants in this study were 60 (30 male, 30 female) undergraduate university students enrolled in a speech communication theory course. During the semester, samples of language behavior were obtained from which estimates of language complexity and flexibility were derived. The linguistic factor of complexity, as related to test-taking ability, was operationalized according to the work of Flesch (1949) wherein complexity is represented by the number of syllables per one-hundred words used by subjects in selected writing samples. Flexibility is represented as a measure of working vocabulary size, specifically, Johnson's (1946, pp. 500-507) type/token ratio, the ratio of different words to total words used in the students' writing samples. Taken together, these two trait-like language predictor variables operationalize linguistic complexity and flexibility in this study.

Academic success was defined as students' scores on a comprehensive multiple-choice test covering communication concepts and communication research findings taken from the course readings. Validity and reliability measures for the test were as follows: (1) initial face validity and content validity evaluations

were rendered by departmental faculty who were familiar with the course, (2) correlation of the criterion examination scores with those of another major course examination was .82 and .84 with overall grade point average in the speech communication major. Finally, the Kuder-Richardson-21 reliability calculation for this measure was .89.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between linguistic complexity and test scores (r= .41; r2= .168; df= 58; p= .05) and between linguistic flexibility and test scores (r= .34, r2= .115; df= 58; p= .05) were statistically significant. Using a multiple-predictor model, a statistical analysis was carried out to determine the extent to which test scores could be predicted by the linguistic variables, complexity and flexibility, in concert. A multiple r of .557 was found accounting for 31% of the variance in test scores. Linguistic complexity accounted for 18% unique variance while linguistic flexibility contributed 12.9% unique variance. These findings, all statistically significant, show that students with superior linguistic intelligence, as derived from the Flesch (1949) and Johnson (1946, pp. 500-507) language indices, are significantly advantaged over their less talented counterparts.

Unless combined with other measures of mental ability, traditional approaches to intelligence often serve as only weak predictors of human performance on learning tasks. Expanding the common two-factor conceptualization of intelligence by embracing a broader range of cognitive abilities serves to increase its explanatory and predictive power with regard to student achievement. In this research, factoring the linguistic talent into two independent counterparts produced a more accurate predictor of students' academic success in a speech communication theory course.

Future researchers should investigate the extent to which the multiple, independent intelligences model is useful in determining the extent to which other operationalizations of linguistic intelligence and, for that matter, Gardner's (1993) other forms of intelligence, individually and in combination, serve to account for

speech communication student achievement scores in a variety of theory and performance courses. Such investigations would be particularly intriguing where such traits account for variance in learning that is separate and independent of actual knowledge gain or performance skill acquisition.

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SCIENTISM AND GENERAL SEMANTICS

Abstract: This essay examines the general semantic use of scientific method as a guide for reforming language. The general semantic appropriation of scientific methods to cure social problems falls short of its goal because it conflates epistemological procedures with truth-value and a lack of attention to social structures that shape language use.

Sometimes the shortcomings of an intellectual movement prove as instructive as its triumphs. Kenneth Burke claims that some notions, such as substance, are such fertile sources of error that they merit attention due to the importance of the misconceptions they produce (Grammar 57). General semantics qualifies as a fertile albeit unfashionable line of thought. The ideas underlying general semantics remain important for at least two reasons. First, the attempt to superimpose scientific method on activities outside traditional auspices of science demonstrates the extent to which a method can or should be transformed into a normative principle. Discovering the limits of such an enterprise should raise questions as to the logical, practical, and ethical legitimacy of extrapolating scientific methods into domains beyond communities of scientists. Second, the shortcomings of general semantics shed light on the limited utility of rhetorical theories dependent on modeling all communicative activity on the procedural canons of positivistic science.

This essay critiques two foundational ideas in general semantics: the need for language use to emulate science, and linguistic revision, the means to achieve this conversion. The discussion proceeds in three steps. First, I describe the general semantic viewpoint. I next examine general semantic assumptions in light of recent characterizations of science more as a suasory than a purely descriptive enterprise. Finally, I assess the significance of the general semantic conception of science for rhetorical theory.

The General Semantic Conception of Science

General semantics arose as a popular linguistic movement while the persuasive power of Nazi and fascist propaganda was being recognized. Alfred Korzybski, the acknowledged founder of general semantics, remarks in his 1941 foreword to Irving J. Lee's Language Habits in Human Affairs that the need for linguistic reform was especially urgent because "present-day abnormal 'Führers'" had already perverted the linguistic and psychological habits of public leaders (Korzybski in Lee x). General semanticists rest their hopes for social improvement on science. Scientific theories "are symbolic harnesses which we use to hitch our dreams to facts" (Johnson, Enchanted 144). The success of science in solving technological problems holds promise for solving linguistic difficulties as well. The picture of science held by general semanticists conforms to the description of 'scientism' offered by McGee and Lyne:

> "Reason, understood as virtually equivalent to scientific method, can save humanity. Science is universal in the sense that the logic of its inquiry is the same in any domain where knowledge is possible. The universal objective of inquiry is explanation and prediction. (383)"

In this spirit, Korzybski contends that science exists for the sole purpose of solving human problems ("Abbreviated Notes" 2). General semantics represents an application of scientific techniques to language for the sake of accomplishing this purpose.

How do general semanticists define 'science'? The special feature of science is its method. Since science proceeds systematically, general semanticists seek to systematize language. General semantics, therefore, represents an attempt to teach a modern, scientific method and to generalize this method to language (Chisolm 1-2, 4). The imposition of method on everyday language use would help reduce the chances of error. 'Error' here designates mismatching symbols and referents. Francis Chisolm contends that science as a method should aid in distinguishing

reality from the way reality appears to individual observers (8). In this way, science reduces the chances of making erroneous judgments.

Chisolm's contention typifies the general semantic belief that language use should remain as close as possible to the level of "factual truth," defined as "statements about the so-called realities of direct experience" (Johnson, Enchanted 134). The means for eliminating linguistic confusion and misuse lie ready at hand in science. Univocity quells controversy about meanings, and awareness of word/thing distinctions prevents univocity from solidifying into unchanging labels that fail to reflect reality's dynamic nature. Since inferences do not rely on direct observation for their truth (Weinberg 15), the normative guideline emerges that language users should 'stick to the facts', i.e., offer accurate descriptions of reality (Walpole 43). "Factual statements approach certainty; they have a high degree of probability of being verified" (Weinberg 16). The insistence on factual description recalls that verification serves as a means not only for ascertaining truth, but as the proper standard by which to judge truth claims. In general semantics, truth equals accuracy. Accuracy, in turn, becomes analogous to mathematical precision: a judgment capable in principle of intersubjective verification in accordance with standard procedures for measurement.

The method of science qua method appears necessary and sufficient to reach solutions to the problems plaguing humankind, from war to prejudice. Korzybski equates problem-solving with mastery of scientific techniques: "[General semantics'] only value is to help the solution of life's problems. But, we have to have a technique. You must master the technique before you can apply it to solve the problems .... It is my business to give you a method to solve your own problems" ("Abbreviated Notes" 2, emphasis in original). Korzybski uses the analogy of mathematics to pinpoint the source of linguistic problems. The most important questions in mathematics center on method. "If we can discover this method, and also discover how this method applies to life, we are discovering the factors of predictability as applied to life" (Korzybski, "Abbreviated Notes" 4). General semanticists regard

method as the means to overcome interpersonal problems. Wendell Johnson proposes adopting science "as a general method of orientation" to "predict and thus to control" the processes of change operant in reality (Quandaries 33, emphasis in original). He seeks to apply to social problems the techniques scientists use to deal with change (Quandaries 34).

The assumption that language users must regain control of their language instigates linguistic change. General semanticists claim that intelligent language use depends on speakers learning to manipulate language skillfully and audiences learning to understand how and why such manipulation occurs (Condon 14). Science offers the solution to people being victimized by language. Scientists define terms operationally, recognizing that names and named bear no necessary relation to each other. Scientists use terms for specific purposes, and if those purposes remain clear, language in the laboratory approaches the scientistic ideal of univocity: a one-to-one correspondence between signifier and signified with definitions understood and terms used consistently. The concept of prediction and control (Johnson, Quandaries 33) extrapolates from the laboratory to the world of everyday conversation. Speech and writing should have "due regard for the language of science" (Johnson, Quandaries 33). This regard elevates scientific language habits to normative status. Not only do scientists use language in a particular way, but this way represents an ideal for which non-scientific discourse should strive.

The arbitrariness of scientific naming can be extended to sign/signified relations generally. The fundamental linguistic principle that a linguistic token has no necessary connection with its designatum (Saussure 67-69) becomes the general semantic dictum "The word is not the thing." Korzybski traces the arbitrariness of sign/signified relationships to the fact that scientific investigations, somehow "more refined" than "common experience," indicate that a world comprised of "different and unique" individuals demands a variety of ways to speak about those individuals (Science & Sanity 254). Language users conscious of this fact would avoid labels based on dogmatic associations between label and object.

For example, a person designated 'convict' need not be considered an immediate threat to a community's safety.

The hope for prediction and control relies on scientific methods lending predictability to human affairs. Empirical verifiability i.e., verifiability in principle determines truth. A statement is true if and only if observable data can corroborate it. Accuracy is a product of observability. "To make a statement about sound," for example, "we must be [logically] capable of perceiving such sound" (Condon 123). General semanticists seek linguistic truth in the form of correspondence to extra-linguistic reality. 'Reality', from the general semantic perspective, boils down to sense-data (Condon 50), which function as Wittgensteinian logical simples to which all language use ultimately refers (Wittgenstein, Tractatus 2.02, 2.021).

The more that discourse abstracts 'away from' the raw material of observable objects comprising the world, the more likely confusion about referents might arise. Abstraction and clarity of perception are inversely related; the more abstraction, the less understanding (Condon 106, 124-126). Harry Weinberg, a biologist and general semanticist, defines a factual statement as "one which is made only after observation and which is verifiable by accepted standards. In other words, it is a verifiable descriptive statement" (15). Korzybski summarizes concisely the scientistic nature of general semantics when he claims that "general semantics is strictly empirical, it is experimental" ("Abbreviated Notes" 4).

A correlate of the general semanticist view of science is the notion that observable 'brute facts' exist, and that observers impose interpretations on these facts. The dictum is: "Understanding first: opinion only after understanding" (Chisolm 5). The ultimate goal of science derives from its ability "to go to the facts first and to abide by them" (Lee 148). Irving J. Lee's resolution to abide by facts indicates that somehow the facts could 'speak for themselves' while scientists simply record their messages. This conception of abiding by the facts suggests that scientific data not only exist independently of observers, but that interpretation of facts depends on the facts themselves and not on human initiative.

The assumption that facts direct scientific inquiry contrasts with the technological goal of manipulating natural occurrences in order

to control them. In dramatistic terms, this emphasis on the "scene" of facts within which scientific activity occurs deflects causal and ethical responsibility for action away from the scientist as agent (Burke, Grammar 49). Scientists could exempt themselves from responsibility for their acts, claiming that they acted not as agents, but as servants to facts.

Limitations of the General Semantic View

What difficulties arise from the general semantic conception of science as the method for arriving at truth through attention to obeservable phenomena? The idea that science offers hope for humanity reveals more than simply an application of the objectives or results of the scientific enterprise to everyday life. General semantics functions within a specialized "terministic screen" (Burke, Language 44-62) where the terminology directs the inquiry toward solutions conforming to the employment of key terms. By adopting scientistic language, general semantics takes a scientistic perspective on social problems. If humanity's difficulties stem from irrationality, impermissible in scientific contexts, then the solution, according to a scientist, would be to make the offenders more rational. This solution is not ipso facto objectionable; it simply represents the scientific means for coping with extra-scientific problems.

The general semanticists' appropriation of scientific method, however, raises more subtle issues. Richard Rorty claims that scientific method is actually not a set of procedures antecedent to scientific discourse, but rather a product of the terminology used when 'speaking scientifically' (Consequences 193-194). Extending Rorty's contention a bit further, it is possible that the very language in which scientific problems are framed helps establish acceptable parameters within which solutions can be found. Rorty's observation, in its original context, is intended to assert the tautological nature of empiricism. His point gains significance, however, when applied to the general semantic version of empiricism.

In general semantics, empirical statements have truth value and meaning because their referents pass beyond the words themselves to what the words represent. Words name things; the realm of language and the realm of reality remain distinct (Korzybski, Science and Sanity 50). Precision in language use assumes paramount importance. Words should fit their referents, just as scientists tailor their terms to specific phenomena being described. Linguistic revision becomes necessary in order "to bring our discourse into accord with the world as we actually find it" (Read 7). Searching for solutions empirically automatically frames acceptable solutions in empirical terms.

This line of thinking parallels Wittgenstein's characterization of philosophical problems as captivation by a picture (PI §115). The general semanticists see the world through a scientistic gestalt. The fact that Korzybski was an engineer is more than coincidental. Korzybski creates a picture of the world as an eternal flux, controllable only by means of a systematic procedure. The difficulty is that general semantics describes more the terms in which it understands reality than how reality 'really is'. The canons of scientific inquiry are dogmatically accepted as being objectively correct for extension to linguistic analysis.

The general semantic claim to solve problems through linguistic reform actually entails a perspectival shift, not a privileged claim to generating more accurate descriptions of reality. Wittgenstein, one of the thinkers to whom Korzybski dedicates Science and Sanity, levels the same criticism against his own Tractatus. Wittgenstein aptly describes his predicament: "The existence of the experimental method makes us think we have the means for solving the problems which trouble us; though problem and solution pass one another by" (PI §232).

The idea that method guarantees the means to arrive at truth also presents problems. Method might not offer a proper basis for certainty of results. McGee and Lyne (6-7) contend that the conditions under which knowledge is produced (e.g., via scientific method) should not be confused with merits of the truth claims arising from the findings. In other words, we must distinguish, although not polarize, the means of generating a knowledge

claim i.e., how the assertion is produced from the reasons why the claim holds true. Kuhn (3) sees no reason for treating method in itself as a necessary or sufficient criterion for a scientific proposition's truth. Polanyi adds that dismissal of results obtained outside traditional methodological canons "may often result in explaining away quite genuine practices or experiences" (51). To dismiss the truth of claims generated by means of asystematic methods amounts to a genetic fallacy, the failure to distinguish truth from logical rigor. Wittgenstein points out several propositions, e.g. 'The world has existed for more than one hundred years', that we treat as true without asking for justification in any scientific sense (OC §§136, 231, 253). In a word, general semantics confuses systematicity with certainty.

The demand that certainty necessarily result from adherence to strict procedures for producing knowledge claims echoes traditional criticisms leveled against rhetoric's status as an art. Rhetoric supposedly offers no invariant guidelines for producing effective speech. The techne of fifth-century BC rhetoricians supplied nothing more than rules of thumb that individual speakers could use more or less effectively. As Leff points out, the inability of rhetoric to give a theoretical account of itself instigated denigration of rhetoric as illusion and a knack (25). Plato's version of 'true rhetoric' imposes methodological rigor on an asystematic practice. The student of rhetoric learns to "speak scientifically," setting forth the nature of the soul (Plato 317). Note that Plato, like the general semanticists, does not discover scientific regularity in language usage, but demands that language exhibit these characteristics. The criticism of rhetoric as non-scientific relies on the use of method as the primary standard for truth or efficacy. Similarly, the criticism of everyday behavior as non-scientific depends on the equation of systematic procedures with correct results.

Besides the possibility that adherence to scientific methodology fails to guarantee arrival at truth, Rorty poses the question whether the very quest for accurate representation of reality is possible or desirable. The arrival at 'truth' often boils down to which terms should be used to describe so-called 'objective reality' (Rorty, Consequences 208). The issue arises, however, that allegedly certain correspondence

of language to reality may be more the product of intersubjective agreement rather than discovery of appropriate referents (cf. Rorty, Mirror 156-157). 'Objective' then would become a compliment paid to whatever persists through "agreement among inquirers" (Rorty, Mirror 335). Rorty argues that objectivity is not necessarily a more worthy goal than solidarity, especially since objectivity as a philosophical goal has proven unattainable in any sense other than mutual agreement ("Science" 41-42). If science exists to solve human problems, then why not envisage scientific knowledge as a means for coping with reality rather instead of as a quest for perfect word-thing correspondence, a goal to which humanity seems denied access? In other words, it might be more in keeping with science's role in society to characterize science by its functions as well as by its methods.

The general semantic quest for predictability likewise raises several problems. Polanyi recognizes that scientists and philosophers defer to "the Pygmalion at work" in them when they assume that predictability results solely from systematicity (104). Structures such as scientific methods are erected that supposedly can generate hypotheses (eventually laws) that would help us understand future events. These constructions actually reflect more the faith in "our subjective self-confidence in claiming to recognize an objective reality" (Polanyi 104) than demonstrate the utility of science. Put more simply, any 'reality' discovered through scientific methods does not become more real simply because it was discovered scientifically. The general semantic ideal of predictability, even if it could be achieved, need not entail embracing 'the' scientific method. The choice of a scientific, empirical method in any given case depends on what seems best for coping with the changing world. This choice is not necessarily the product of scientific inquiry, but results from concerns rooted more in ethics, aesthetics, and even theology than in epistemology.

The optimistic prospects for orientational change through linguistic reform should not obscure the difficulties involved in such revision. The quest for linguistic revision relies on the assumption of arbitrary word-thing relations. The sign-signifier relation, however, reflects embedded cultural attitudes and

practices. Perhaps a change in linguistic habits would call attention to the practical roots of linguistic practices, but changing the terminology itself would not overcome the cultural inertia of custom underlying the practices. General semanticists propose scientific linguistic reforms to focus on the attitudes underlying linguistic usage. The reformatory devices themselves need not actually be employed once communicators understand the principle of universal flux (Johnson, Quandaries 224).

Linguistic revision, however, attacks only one symptom of practical problems such as war, prejudice, and misunderstanding. Prescriptions for linguistic usage appear to offer only a partial solution for the difficulties they were intended to solve. Rather than change only language, which reflects the idiom in which communicators live (Polanyi 105), a more productive, albeit challenging, project would involve reforming the social conditions of inequity or oppression reflected in language. Rhetoric maintains a dynamic relationship with the society in which it occurs. Linguistic reform need not receive priority over social reform, as if we had to choose between the two. Although language can and often does control the way we think (Edie 170), language and social practice maintain a symbiotic relationship. Compliance-gaining strategies, for example, reflect intentional use of language to achieve a predetermined end. On the other hand, the terms in which a question is framed establish, to a large extent, the types of actions allowable as solutions.

The general semantic contention that language fails to reflect change poses another difficulty. Although linguistic reform itself might reflect noble intentions, a gap opens between discovering linguistic difficulties and prescribing correct usage. Wittgenstein contends that linguistic reform could show an order to language, but not the order (PI §132). If the general semanticists agree that no description is final, then the scientific model of usage should remain provisional instead of acting as a normative goal. This prescription amounts to assigning one language-game priority over all others. Language has multiple functions, and the fact that one word or one proposition can be used in several different ways obscures the variety of ways communicators can employ

language (Wittgenstein, PI §§24, 224). Changing the words themselves accomplishes little unless the motives underlying usage also change. The primary reason general semanticists offer for using science as the role model for language is that science reflects reality's changeable nature. This justification, however, amounts to a metaphysical pronouncement that change is the reality to be described. Such a statement falls outside scientific verifiability, demonstrating Aristotle's point that "the fundamental principle or starting point for scientific knowledge cannot itself be the object either of science, of art, or of practical wisdom" (Nic. Eth. VI.1141a.33-35).

Implications for Rhetorical Criticism

What does the general semantic conception of science portend for rhetoric? The first dividend to collect from general semantics is a better understanding of the shortcomings of treating one version of scientific method as defining ethical or accurate rhetorical activity. Donald Bryant, in his classic establishment of rhetoric's parameters, uses terminology closely akin to that of general semantics. "Rhetoric is method, not subject," claims Bryant, and this method aims at attaining "maximum probability" upon which to base decisions (202, 205). Rhetoric should follow the model of scientific method. "So far as it is method, rhetoric is like the established procedures of experimental science and like logic" (Bryant 210). The main difference between science and rhetoric is that rhetorical decisions must be made more quickly, before all the evidence has been assimilated (Bryant 210-211). Nevertheless, the way rhetoric functions falls under the rubric of scientific procedure. Rhetoric "serves the speaker as laboratory procedures for analysis serve the chemistæby systematic inventory it enables him to determine with reasonable completeness what is present and what is absent in any given case" (Bryant 219).

Bryant fails to reveal why rhetoric should resemble science; he claims only that rhetoric is scientific. The questions raised about the general semantic enterprise re-emerge. Why must results of higher probability come from activities possessing a method in

the conventional scientific sense? What is the relationship between the procedure used to obtain knowledge and the truth of that knowledge? The difficulties to which general semantics points receive no more thorough coverage in Bryant's understanding of rhetoric. The qualification that "the development of rhetorical theory demands a variety of methods" (Becker 12) does not escape the preceding criticisms. Whether the quest is for one or several methods, systematicity itself becomes the defining or most desirable feature of rhetorical activity.

If science cannot or should not be treated solely in terms of descriptive method, how can science and rhetoric interact? One step in reconceptualizing the connection between science and rhetoric may be to stress that science need not be elevated to a privileged position to remain useful or important. The notion that rhetorical criticism must somehow defer its authority to science surfaces in Bowers' claim that rhetorical criticism should "contribute to an economical set of scientifically verifiable statements accounting for the origins and effects of all rhetorical discourses in all contexts" (127, emphasis in original). Criticism becomes pre-scientific in the sense that "rhetorical criticism be viewed as an early part of a process eventuating in scientific discovery" (Bowers 127). What makes science the court of last resort? According to Bowers, the critic "has no assurance" that all critical generalizations "are not based on coincidence." A critic "must employ something approaching experimental methods . . . . *He must make successful predictions in controlled situations*" (Bowers 141).

Bowers does indicate the usefulness of integrating social science with rhetorical theory and criticism (134). This qualification, however, does not eradicate the investiture of science with ultimate authority to arrive at accurate descriptions of reality. Bowers apparently shares with general semanticists the view that some specifiable relationship logically must exist between the means for arriving at knowledge (scientific method), the structure of that means (relying on verifiable generalizations), and the status of knowledge resulting from applying the method (truth or accurate

predictions). In many fields, method and results are intertwined. Economics, mathematical probability, and sociology would be in shambles if methodological choices were inconsequential. I contend only that public policies in general and rhetorical judgments in particular need not be justified by an appeal to a single method.

Recognizing the limits of linguistic correspondence to an extra-linguistic reality might improve conceptions of rhetoric based on assumptions of correspondence. Viewing rhetoric as "adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas" (Bryant 211), either the logos or the audience must remain static long enough to allow the rhetor to make appropriate adaptations. Ideas and people, however, remain dynamic. It appears difficult to reconcile the changeability of the world with rhetorical adaptation. How does the rhetor adapt message and delivery to audience when neither element has a constant nature? Rhetoric "as a social function which permits interactivity among people" (McGee 27) is more than a logical operation of matching words to things; it is an act of judging the appropriate circumstances and times to make communicative choices. These judgments, as Plato recognized, are not methodical in a scientific sense, but may nevertheless be quite effective and accurate. Of course scientific discourse, or any discourse for that matter, can be treated as a way of achieving structural isomorphism with reality (cf. Korzybski, Science and Sanity 260). This approach, however, de-emphasizes the more pragmatic aspect of discourse binding language-users to each other rather than to a transcendent reality (McGee 27).

General semantics calls attention to the power of language. Behavior and adjustment often depend on unconscious linguistic assumptions (Chisolm 30); e.g., Is the psychologist's patient 'really' a neurotic? Words do have the power to control thought, yet the power of language resides in the social norms and attitudes reflected as well as created linguistically (Condon 158). The process of becoming more aware of language, however, only indirectly addresses the issue of social factors that channel linguistic usage. Power rests in language, but it also rests in the connection between language and the political institutions or

individuals who manipulate language. Korzybski recognizes that educational reforms could eliminate repression and delusion (Science and Sanity lxxxi), but his point misses the mark. Education alone will not solve society's problems as long as educational institutions reproduce rather than reform the existing social order.

Terry Eagleton argues that "[r]hetorical effects are calculated in the light of a theory of the polis as a whole" (113). While a reformer need not embrace Eagleton's socialistic solution, the socialistic perspective reveals that social reform must be broad-based in order to have significant, long-lasting effect. The war against prejudice and injustice cannot be waged only in the classroom. The battlefield for the general semanticists' goals is not language alone, but the political and social structures acting as agents of control.

Certainly practices cannot and should not be separated from the language that describes them (Taylor 24). To this extent, the general semanticists are correct. General semantics fails, however, to emphasize sufficiently the interdependence of social reality with language (Taylor 24). General semanticists recognize that linguistic change might institute social change, but they do not indicate that language and social practice are more deeply intertwined than correspondence relationships between words and referents indicate. Jacques Barzun cautions linguistic reformers against thinking that "our real difficulties are wholly contained in the words instead of in the world as well" (130). If we seek to ameliorate social problems such as maladjustment, demagoguery, and misunderstanding, linguistic reform must bring with it some reform in social institutions or in those who hold power over the propagation of public messages. Reforming words also entails reforming the proprietors of those words.

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